



CRG International PhD Programme Fellowships “la Caixa” – Severo Ochoa 2015 Call Text

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

"la Caixa" Foundation is a non-profit organisation that since 1982, runs several programmes in the education and research field, poverty and social exclusion, environment and culture. The educational and research programme promotes academic research and equal opportunities. In the past thirty years, thousands of students have been able to develop their studies with a “la Caixa” fellowship.

Since 2008 “la Caixa” Foundation has been supporting International PhD Programmes from selected Spanish biomedical institutes, such as the CRG, to promote excellent science in Spain. “la Caixa” Foundation is currently providing support to the CRG and other Spanish Centers of Excellence recognised with the Severo Ochoa Award by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness.

The CRG is recruiting within the CRG International PhD Fellowship Programme “la Caixa”- Severo Ochoa, highly talented and motivated students with outstanding qualifications to carry out a PhD in biomedicine at the CRG.

Fellows will benefit from an exciting international scientific environment and an integrated training programme, including access to state of the art infrastructure , lectures and seminars, specialised scientific and technological courses, complementary skills training and career development activities, postdoctoral symposia and retreats, as well as social activities.

Successful candidates will join research groups with top-level scientists and will carry out their research in one of the following programmes:

- Bioinformatics and Genomics
- Cell and Developmental Biology
- Gene Regulation, Stem Cell and Cancer
- Systems Biology

The current call offers 3 positions funded by “la Caixa” and 6 positions with funds provided by the MINECO Severo Ochoa Pre-doctoral Call. At least 3 additional positions will be offered with funds provided by the CRG.

Eligibility criteria

Candidates should fulfil the following eligibility criteria at the time of the call deadline. If it becomes clear before, during or after the evaluation phase that one or more of the eligibility criteria have not been fulfilled, the proposal is declared ineligible and is withdrawn from any further examination.

- Candidates must have obtained a University Degree in Life Sciences or related subjects, within the European Higher Education System (minimum 240 ECTS), or a University Degree that allows to start a PhD thesis in the candidate’s home country by September 2015. Candidates who expect to be awarded with such degree by September 2015 are eligible to apply.
- Candidates must have an excellent academic record, previous research experience and a strong commitment for scientific research.
- Candidates must have a high working knowledge of English



- Candidates applying for the positions funded by “la Caixa” and the MINECO Severo Ochoa Pre-doctoral Call may not have worked at the CRG for more than 3 months before the call deadline.
Candidates applying for the positions funded by “la Caixa” may not have obtained previously a “la Caixa” postgraduate fellowship.
- The call is open to candidates of any nationality.

In case of doubts about the eligibility criteria, applicants should contact the Academic Office (phdprogram@crg.es) prior to submitting an application.

Application process

Applications for the CRG International PhD Fellowship Programme “la Caixa – Severo Ochoa” 2015 are accepted exclusively online through our online application system. **The deadline for the receipt of complete applications (including reference letters) is the 30th January 2015, at 5:00pm (local time).** Proposals must be written in English.

Applicants will be asked to complete the following information on the application form:

- CV specifying education and experience (including transcripts, honours, scholarships, prizes and awards, research experience and scientific interests)
- Details on the referees that will provide two letters of reference. Referees will send their confidential letters directly to CRG using the online application.
- Research groups to carry out the PhD project. The list of the research groups that have agreed to participate in the Programme is available on the website. Applicants should indicate up to two different research programmes in which they would like to work, in order of preference. More information on the research activities of each group can be found on the CRG web page.

Candidates should ensure that all information, including reference letters, is submitted before the deadline. Incomplete applications will not be eligible.

Applicants are advised to read the FAQs when preparing their applications. For any additional information or questions, please contact the Academic Officer at phdprogram@crg.es

All personal data requested by CRG from applicants will be treated in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act (15/13 December 1999).

Selection process

After the deadline, submitted proposals will be checked for eligibility by the Academic Office and those proposals that do not meet the criteria will not undergo evaluation and will be rejected. All eligible applications will be reviewed by a Selection Committee formed by CRG faculty members on the basis of the candidate’s academic record, scientific potential and interests and reference letters.

The evaluation is organised in three steps:

1. **Pre-selection:** The pre-selection will be based on the candidate’s CV, reference letters and research interests for the oral interviews.

Eligible applicants are informed about the outcome of the pre-selection via email approximately 10 days after the application deadline. No individual feedback will be provided at this stage



2. **Oral interviews:** Pre-selected candidates will be invited to visit the CRG for a five-day interview, which will take place within 6-9 weeks after the application deadline. Travel and accommodation expenses will be covered by the CRG.

Candidates will visit the institute, meet their prospective supervisors in a short open talk and pass an interview with the Selection Committee panel. All applications, together with the interview report will be evaluated by a panel of experts. The final decision on the selection will be taken in a consensus meeting which will be held after the oral interview.

3. **Notification to candidates:** Applicants pre-selected for the interviews will be notified of the final selection decision by email and the list of the successful candidates will be published on the CRG website. Successful candidates will be asked to accept or decline the offer within two weeks after the notification. Fellowships should start no later than October 1st, 2015. Exceptions for later start dates might be considered if duly justified.

Applicants who have received a positive evaluation but could not be funded will be included on a reserve list to cover future positions and might be contacted at a later stage. Individual feedback can be provided for short-listed candidates upon request.

Appointment conditions

Selected PhD students will receive an annual work contract with a competitive salary that will be renewed annually for up to 4 years following the applicable national regulations. All PhD students will receive full health and occupational insurance coverage and will be included in the Spanish Social Security System.

The 3 top ranked candidates will be supported by “la Caixa” and will receive a slightly competitive salary. All PhD students will receive additional funding to cover for expenses related to PhD tuition fees, participation in conferences, training sessions or any other activity related to the scientific or academic activity of the PhD students.

Upon acceptance of the fellowship, fellows sign a *Work Contract* with the CRG, which contains the appointment conditions following the CRG regulations, in particular:

- The PhD thesis has to be completed within 4 years.
- PhD students will work full-time at the CRG and may not receive any other fellowship, or regular income.
- Support by this Programme will be duly acknowledged in any scientific or communication authored by the PhD students.
- Students will submit an annual report to the Academic Office detailing the scientific progress, and productivity and any other activities related to the PhD thesis carried out during the year.
- PhD Students will need to adhere to the CRG Fellowship regulations and CRG Technology Transfer Policy when joining the International PhD Programme.

PhD Training Programme

The PhD Programme **curriculum** consists of the research project/thesis work and a structured training programme combined with scientific and community activities:

Research project/thesis work: Each PhD student is expected to work full time for their PhD thesis in the research group of the PhD Supervisor. Short visits/secondments are encouraged during the PhD. Participation in international conferences is part of the PhD Programme (students should have participated at least in one international meeting). The student's progress is closely



monitored by a thesis advisory committee (TAC) with the aim to improve the quality of research and research training, reporting annually to the Graduate Committee. It is mandatory to organize and pass one thesis committee/year until the defence of the thesis.

Structured Training Programme

- **Subject-related course work:** First year students participate in an introductory course that aims to introduce PhD students to new techniques and high-end technologies. Courses include both theoretical and practical sessions. A good knowledge of research integrity issues as well as logical reasoning in life science research form the basis of the curriculum. In addition, each student is expected to acquire a strong basic knowledge in a wide range of research topics represented by the PIs.

Depending on the topic of the thesis work the students can choose additional relevant courses from a wide range of external (courses@CRG) and internal courses (CRG Coach) covering from practical scientific to technological courses, as well as seminar series offered regularly at PRBB and CRG.

- **Transferable skills and career development:** In addition to subject-related course work, students can participate in transferable skills and career development courses offered by the PRBB Programme INTERVALS that includes courses that are necessary to carry out experimental work in academic research, as well training in transferable skills and career development in a range of skills to enhance future career progress and improve employability. Fellows will also acquire transferable skills by participating in the scientific/community activities, including organisation of the annual PhD Symposia, involvement in outreach activities and managing the research project. Language courses (English, Spanish) are also offered by the CRG

Helpdesk

A document containing the Frequently Asked Questions about the Programme can be consulted on the website. Please contact the Academic Office at phdprogram@crg.eu for any queries or assistance.

CRG has received the "HR Excellence in Research" award from the European Commission in 2013 and is committed with the principles of the European Charter and Code, in particular with non-discriminatory, transparent and merit-based recruitment and selection procedures.

The CRG International Programme Fellowship "la Caixa" – Severo Ochoa is supported by:

